



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

SENATOR MICHAEL A. McLACHLAN
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

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Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am here today to speak in support of *Senate Bill 56, An Act Concerning Pulse Oximetry Screening for Newborn Infants*.

In June 2011 I was contacted by a constituent named Marie Hatcher. Mrs. Hatcher was on a very simple mission – to ensure that every newborn in the state of Connecticut receives a life-saving test called pulse oximetry screening.

Mrs. Hatcher's youngest son, Matthew, who is now three, suffers a serious congenital heart defect called hypoplastic right heart syndrome. He has undergone multiple heart surgeries since his birth, the latest having occurred this past August. As a nurse, Mrs. Hatcher knew to ask for the elective pulse oximetry screening in-utero, a procedure that literally saved Matthew's life. Not all families are as fortunate.

As stated previously, currently, the screening is elective, and primarily occurs when it is requested by a parent or recommended by a physician. Due to its elective nature many newborns go home with undetected heart defects and later pass away from them. Such events are disastrous for families and communities.

Senate Bill 56 aims to require pulse oximetry screenings be administered to newborns born in Connecticut. A pulse oximetry screening is a simple, non-invasive, procedure used to measure the amount of oxygen in one's blood. It is the most effective way to screen for congenital heart defects.

The equipment necessary to administer this screening is already in all Connecticut's hospitals. Additionally, the staff who would administer this test is already trained in the proper way to do such. This is due to the fact that the procedure is currently elective.

The cost per screening is approximately \$10. This is far less expensive than what it would cost to provide a lifetime of medical care to a child diagnosed with a heart defect later in life, or the emotional cost to a family if their child was to be lost.

Similar legislation has already been passed into law, or is pending passage in many other states. Connecticut's neighbors New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and most recently New Hampshire all have laws on the books that mandate pulse oximetry screening on newborns. These are just a hand full of states already mandating this life-saving procedure.

Overall, this legislation is about ensuring Connecticut's children are healthy, and stay that way. I urge the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time.